

GREETINGS FROM THE PASTOR:

What an unbelievable March! I am not talking about Holy Week and Easter, although our worship services were truly outstanding, from the children's program on Palm Sunday to the choral anthems on Good Friday and the festive celebrations of Easter Sunday. I am not talking about the strong showing we enjoyed with our Sunday Evening Lenten Services. I am talking about the generosity that overflowed into heartfelt support for Steve Dague and his family. Not many had heard about Steve's tragic fall in his garage back on February 17. By the time March 2 came along, we realized that Steve's recovery from a serious spinal cord injury was going to take quite a while, and that short-term needs were beginning to spill over into long-term concerns. So, at the Sunday Evening celebration of our partnership with St. Paul's Catholic Church, with Dave Palumbo leading our efforts in the kitchen and Dale Jacobs leading our worship service in the Sanctuary, we decided to dedicate our Lenten service offering to Steve Dague. That, as it turned out, was just the beginning of a phenomenal month.

We collected \$185 with that first offering. The next week our youth dedicated the freewill offering during dinner to the Dagues, and that added another \$605 to the cause. In the meantime, we came up with a spur-of-the-moment fundraising idea to host a benefit concert at Zion before the end of March. We knew that our congregational family would support it, but we wondered what we could do on such short notice. Suzanne Walters had the perfect idea. Our Senior Choir had performed a number of choral pieces from a cantata entitled "*Who Is This King?*" Why not perform the cantata in its entirety? Zion's Praise Team could quickly master the parts as yet unlearned; and *voila*, this benefit concert idea just might work. Council strongly endorsed the idea, and instantly became the sales force for distributing 300 tickets at \$5.00 apiece. We applied to the Stark Chapter of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans for a *Community Abounds* grant; and the good folks at Thrivent pledged a free \$3,333 if we could raise \$10,000 – and that, as you all know by now, is exactly what we did.

It was unbelievable watching this great effort come together. Zion's Senior Choir and Praise Team had the hardest job, actually learning a cantata in its entirety in the week following Easter! Selling 300 tickets is a lot harder than many think, but I was amazed as the totals grew beyond that number. We sent letters to our members and friends telling them about Steve's fall, his family's needs, and our idea for a Benefit Concert, inviting them to support our efforts. We discovered again that the old adage is true: if they know, they'll care; and if they care, they'll share! That's exactly what happened. By week three, the total we had received increased to \$2,965. Then, beginning with the day after Easter, the outpouring of generosity jumped to a whole new level. By March 29, we had received almost \$9,000 in donations. By the time the Benefit Concert began it was very clear that we were going to generously exceed the goals we had set. From an impromptu announcement at a Lenten service on March 2nd to the celebration of a community's love in action, we raised over to \$20,000 for Steve Dague and his family!

This would indeed have been unbelievable if we hadn't been preparing for our celebration of Easter, when God proved that He was up to accomplishing the impossible, and then passed that dream along to us through the gift of faith in the Risen Lord. Thank you to all of you for making God's amazing grace so believable. Thank you for making God's love so real and the Spirit's presence so powerful. Thank you all.

THANKS FOR THE CANTATA!

What a treat! The Senior Choir has been singing anthems from *Who Is This King?* for a couple of years; and we sang five pieces from it preparing for Holy Week this year. But what a wonderful difference it makes to hear the entire cantata in one presentation! That's what we enjoyed with our benefit concert. It is such a powerful piece of music. Lloyd Larson and Joseph Martin have mastered the Scriptural texts along with the religious movement of Holy Week. Each piece added strength upon strength, combining a sense of the familiar with a feel for the shocking drama that was tragically unfolding.

Suzanne Walters had a vision of the whole, and she brought all of the pieces and all of our voices together beautifully. With so little time to prepare, a view of the cantata from the inside was both humbling and inspiring. Zion's Praise Team brings such dedication and talent to the worship we offer. Dale Jacobs, Brian Walters, Darlene Milavickas, Marilyn Espe-Sherwindt, Beth Heller, and Suzanne Walters nailed their parts – in a good way. The Senior Choir had the added benefit of some familiar faces moving from behind the organ to sing with the tenors (Fred Locker) and the basses (Phil Lehenbauer). Joyce Gibeaut and Helen Heller also had help, with Jennifer Vaughn, a colleague of Suzanne's, joining the sopranos. The entire event was a huge hit – in a good way. Vicki Givler, Matt Slease, Mabel Snyder and Pastor Sherwindt: we're so blessed at Zion.

Those who came to show their support for the Dague family received quite a treat with the worship we offered. The Sanctuary was full, with all of us there enjoying the story of our salvation sung through the music of Lloyd Larson & Joseph Martin, filling our hearts and our lives with the spirit of praise.

DELICIOUS DESSERTS, TOO!

Everything came together perfectly: the worship service went beautifully, the offering left us speechless, and the reception was the grand finale to a truly wonderful evening. We would like to thank Carol Rossbach and Betty Tracy for taking charge of the planning. Debbie Fox and Connie Frank had a hand in the process, too, inviting the rest of us to join in the effort of preparing our version of dessert heaven – table upon table of delicious selections, from gourmet cookies to cherries jubilee! We were prepared for all comers, and everyone who came now knows what it means to enjoy some classic Zion hospitality.

Eyes were opened, embraces shared, and hearts were filled with an over-abundance of love everywhere evident. Darlene Dague and their boys, Eric and Justin, were surrounded by circles of friends and layers of family, ranging from their immediate families, to their church family at Zion, and the wider family of churches, many of whom added to the collection we received, along with neighbors, community groups, boating clubs, and others moved by our common desire to reach out with help to people we care about. Betty Dague was accompanied by a great group of friends from the Danbury. Many of these folks have been to Zion before to enjoy the Steel Drum Band; but this time was different. Zion's Praise Team and Senior Choir set the tone; master chefs all sustained the spirit of camaraderie and love; and the totals with our collection saw jaws drop when they heard the news that we had just witnessed a miracle – \$20,000 in short-term help and long-term love.

God had blessed us in every way, with the worship we offered, the desserts we enjoyed, the fellowship that made our joy complete.

CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

We enjoyed another Council Meeting with excellent attendance: Carol Rossbach, Jim Fidler, Jayne Schrader, Dave Palumbo, Tina Beaber, Betty Tracy, Mary Humbert, Bob Lancashire, Mark Votaw, Chris Thomas and Pastor Sherwindt. Steve Ross was held up at work. Dale Jacobs will be joining us as our Worship Ministry Elder.

In January we were able to hold our own due to our carry-over surplus from 2007. February continued the pattern of high heating bills and lots of snow to plow (as well as parking lots to salt). Expenses-to-date have exceeded income by \$5,609.33. Some of this can be explained by looking at the usual causes. Our 2008 heating bills, as in 2007, are running well above what was budgeted, leaving us in quite a hole. Plus, snow plowing expenses are running about \$800 ahead of last year. So, that accounts for half the deficit. Lighter giving accounts for the other half of our year-to-date deficit.

We ended 2007 on a very strong note, and we have certainly overachieved in so many ways during the first quarter of 2008; but we will soon have to begin to focus our attention on the operating budget because weakness there affects the strength of the church and our ongoing ministries.

ZION'S FINANCIAL FACTS: FEBRUARY

February Income	15,974.71
February Expenses	<u>21,634.92</u>
February (Deficit)	(5,660.21)
Income thru February	34,320.76
Expenses thru February	<u>39,930.09</u>
2008 YTD Deficit	(5,609.33)
2007 YTD (Deficit)	(5,174.98)

We thank you for your generous support!

MORE COUNCIL NEWS

Parish Life Ministry: Bob Lancashire announced that softball is near. The North Canton Ministerial Association's Coed Softball League is ready to launch its fourth season, once again making use of the fields at Dogwood Park here in North Canton. An organizational meeting scheduled for March 25 will lay out the rules for the league. We are looking forward to fielding 18 teams.

Property Ministry: Chris Thomas was busy helping Brian Walters with the Sanctuary Renovation project, but took the time to remind us that the Boiler Task Force is on track to make some recommendations about the future of heating and air conditioning at Zion. We're not quite ready to schedule a congregational meeting, but progress is being made as we link problems with solutions, and costs with possibilities.

Learning Ministry: Tina Beaber reported on some of the things that our youth have done (the Souper Bowl in February) and will do (the Mission Trip in June), while also letting us know that plans for Vacation Bible School are taking shape. Our dates are set: *July 21—25*. The curriculum has been chosen: *God's Big Backyard*. The focus of our fun will be on service – serve family, friends, neighbors, community, and Jesus.

Social Outreach Ministry: Betty Tracy will take the lead in helping to plan our fundraisers for the Dagues and our upcoming boiler undertaking. She will also take on some added responsibilities in helping to oversee the ministry of our food pantry.

Worship Ministry: While still without a Worship Ministry Elder (awaiting Dale Jacobs joining us at our April meeting), we formally agreed to accept (with regrets) the resignation of Suzanne Walters as Music Director, effective June 1st of this year.

GREAT NEWS FROM ZION'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Wednesday, April 30: Youth Service Event at 5:30 p.m. (High School & Catechism)

Sunday, May 4: Celebration of Confirmation during our 10:30 a.m. Worship Service

June 21st – 28th: Our Third Mission Trip to New Orleans is ... ON! Plan to join us!

Week of July 21st – 25th: Dates for Vacation Bible School are set: *God's Big Backyard*

THE CHILDREN'S EASTER PROGRAM AND OUR EASTER EGG HUNT

The Children's Easter Program, *Harriet's Easter Hunt*, was truly wonderful this year! The kids did an outstanding job! It was an enjoyable adventure we saw unfold as a little girl went on an "Easter Hunt" to find what Easter really means. What a glorious celebration as Harriet discovered that Jesus is alive and that He loves her and all of us very much!



We want to first thank the children for all of their hard work and dedication to this year's program. We had a great time working on the play. We would also like to thank all of our parents for sharing your children and for your flexibility with all of our scheduling. We have an amazingly wonderful group! Thanks to all.

Thank you as well to Suzanne Walters for her wonderful direction of the music, and to all of our Sunday School staff and parent volunteers for their help! Mary Humbert, Annie Lemmo, Connie Riffle, Janet Slease, Melissa Riffle, Connie Frank, Corlene Coulter and Vicki Givler: we truly appreciate all of your time and dedication to the children, not only for this year's Easter Program, but for everything you do! Also, thanks to Mary Humbert for helping with the costumes, and thanks to Brian Walters for helping with the sound system. We have a great group of people who make our programs such a great success!

We would also like to thank everyone for their help with the Easter Egg Hunt this year! We appreciate all the candy donations from our families, and thank you to the High School class for filling the eggs. We hid about six-hundred eggs this year and the kids had a great time filling their baskets. We had a great time on Easter Sunday, and, despite Easter arriving so early this year, we were still able to go outside! We are very fortunate to have such great parents and such a great Sunday School Staff. I would also like to thank the Catechism and High School youth for partnering with our youngest children to help them during our Annual Easter Egg Hunt!

MORE GOOD NEWS FOR THE YOUTH OF ZION

PRE-KINDERGARTEN THRU THE SIXTH GRADE

During the month of April, we will go back to our regular Sunday School schedule. Teachers will continue teaching important stories from the Bible with crafts, games, snacks and much more. There will be *no children's choir practice* during the month of April. Sunday School will begin at 9:15 a.m. in the children's respective classrooms, and will end at 10:15 a.m.

ZION'S CATECHISM AND HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES

On Wednesday, April 30th, the youth in the Catechism and High School classes are invited to attend a service event as a follow up to their Souper Bowl of Caring. The youth will leave Zion at 5:30 p.m. to go to the *Refuge of Hope Soup Kitchen* in Canton to serve dinner. Please be at the church no later than 5:20 p.m. because the group needs to leave on time in order to be at Refuge of Hope by 6:00 p.m. Any adults that are interested in helping are also welcome!

THANK YOU TO ALL FOR A GREAT LENTEN DINNER

Thanks to all of the youth and their families for a great Lenten Dinner and a really powerful Lenten Service. We are very grateful to all for the delicious food donations. We had a great meal and collected a very generous freewill offering that evening, which was directed to help with our donations for the Dague family. We really appreciate everyone's support! We extend a special thank you to the Kay family for taking the lead with the dinner!

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! AND MORE THANK YOU'S

We would like to thank everyone for their support of the Acme receipt program. Because of your effort, we will be receiving a check for \$189.00 from Acme to go to our youth program. This was a great success in light of the changes that have been made to Acme's program. We truly appreciate everyone for saving and bringing in all those receipts!

WE'VE GOT A DATE FOR VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL!

Vacation Bible School is scheduled for the week of July 21—25, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Join us as we have a great week of learning and fun in *God's Big Backyard!* The week will be all about service: *Serve Family, Serve Friends, Serve Neighbors, Serve Community* and *Serve Jesus*. As always, we will need plenty of volunteers to make our VBS a success. If you are available and interested, please contact Debbie Fox at 330-966-2433. If you are not available during that week, there are still many other ways to help out. In May and June, we will put out donation cans, along with sign-up sheets for the food and supplies needed for the week as well as sign-up sheets for the work days to do all of the prep work for VBS. We truly appreciate the support Zion always gives for this great event!



THE WOMEN OF ZION

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” [Matthew 5:9]
Session 8 of our study on the beatitudes is entitled *Making Peace and Being Peace*. The author begins by sharing how she has found herself drawn to a story in the Old Testament that seems to be about the quintessential peacemaker. Her name is Ruth, and her story is both personally inviting and culturally bold in showing us the way to peace. Plan to join us for our **Bible study** on **Tuesday, April 15**, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in Luther Hall. Ruth has much to teach us about making the connection between being at peace within and working to make peace with others. If you have not yet joined us on our journey through the Beatitudes, this is the lesson that will bless you in learning to follow our Lord.

Zion's Comfort Givers meet on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, April 10 & 24, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in Luther Hall. We enjoy coffee, conversation, and being filled with the feeling of knowing that we are helping others through the good that we do. Please feel free (and invited) to join us.

CHANCEL FLOWERS: We love to adorn our Chancel for our Sunday Services. The flowers are \$15.00 per vase and we can have up to four vases each Sunday. Flowers can be picked up after the 10:30 a.m. service, or if you prefer, you can leave them for the sick, shut-in, or hospitalized, in which case the Chancel Guild will deliver them. The vases can be reserved in honor of a birthday, an anniversary, or in memory of loved ones. We have an open Sunday on April 27. If you are interested in this Sunday, or any other Sunday, please call Susan Heyard at 330-499-9858. You may get an answering message, but rest assured that your request will be processed and your flowers reserved.

THANK YOU'S TO ZION

Dear Members of Zion's Food Pantry Crew,
Thank you for the food, which we needed very badly. Our utilities really caused a shortfall in food. There are so many things to thank you for that I don't know where to start. So, I'll just say, you're really special, and thanks with all my heart.

*Clinton, Pat, & Lisa Kirkpatrick
Your neighbors in North Canton*

Pastor Sherwindt and Members of Zion,
Thank you for all your cards, concern and prayers, and for the flowers, too. A special thanks to Pastor for his visits and prayers.

*In Christian love,
Dick Smith*

APRIL SENIOR BIRTHDAYS

April 3	Peter Fenney
April 6	Cherie Henson
April 7	Sondra Elsass
April 7	Anna Mae LeBeau
April 9	Mary Jane Hawkins
April 11	Helen Ballentine
April 21	Ruth Storch
April 21	Mary Gsellman
April 22	Charlie Danner
April 26	John Long

ANNIVERSARIES IN APRIL

April 5	Susan & Robert Heyard
April 16	Vicki & Clarence Givler
April 20	Melanie & Chris Whalen
April 22	Dick & Deborah Weikel
April 26	Cathy & Neal Kodish

With changes occurring in the Church Office, it is once again our request that you let us know if we have missed an anniversary or a birthday with our listings on this page or the Sunday School page. Just call us at 330-499-3909. Thank you.

EVEN MORE THANK YOU'S

We have already taken the time on several occasions to thank our thespians for their dramatic portrayals of passion narrative characters during the Sundays of Lent: Jim Fidler as Caiaphas, Pete Fenney as St. Peter, Pastor Sherwindt as Barabbas, Dale Jacobs as Judas, and the Youth of Zion in their reading of the St. Matthew's Passion Narrative.

There are also many others who played such crucial roles in helping us get through Holy Week. The Senior Choir and Praise Team always make such a difference to the worship we offer. Thank you to Suzanne Walters, Tina Beaber, Marilyn Espe-Sherwindt, Joyce Gibeaut, Vicki Givler, Beth Heller, Helen Heller, Dale Jacobs, Flo Jensen, Pastor Sherwindt, Matt Slease, Mabel Snyder, and Brian Walters. Your anthems were so moving and your singing was a strength to the praise we offered and joy we received with worship. We also want to thank our organists, Fred Locker and Phil Lehenbauer. They contribute so much to our worship. We are truly blessed.

We are blessed as well with some exceptional readers, and we extend our thanks to the many who read lessons and mediations during Holy Week: Pete Fenney, Elaine Fidler, Jane Fairman, Charlie Danner, Betty Tracy, Jim Fidler, Christian Heller, Matt and Ben Mathie, Todd Cizek, Ronda Keating, Brooke Roman, Kelly Walters, Betty Taylor, Karen Sitzman, along with all of our youth, including Carley Frank, Savannah Heller, Marissa Keating, Corey Beaber, Nicole Ross, Michelle Cohen, Kevin Walters, Nathan Fox, Brooke and Taylor Roman, Laura Kay, Lauren Mathie, and Brandon Stout. As long as we are talking about our Sunday School kids, how could we possibly say enough to thank the mainstay of the Sunday School, our Christian Ed Director, Debbie Fox. Thank, you, thank you, and thank you again!

SUNDAY MOVIES RETURN!

Sunday Night at the Movies has shifted to the afternoons. During the four Sundays in April, we have scheduled four great movie classics for four o'clock in the afternoon. We'll draw the curtains to block out the sun, sit back with snacks and drinks, and prepare for a good flick with some quality discussion to follow. Then, at six o'clock we will start the Sunday Evening Service, which will include Holy Communion.

The feature film for **April 6th** will be *Barabbas*. This 1962 classic starring Anthony Quinn will allow us to return to the themes of Lent and Holy Week, when we saw that Jesus had made quite an impression with the Zealots of his day. Why did the Zealots find Jesus' message to their liking? Why did the Romans execute Jesus in a manner reserved for revolutionaries? Is there more to Pilate's pairing of Jesus and Barabbas than meets the eye at first glance? Join us for a movie classic, and for the service that follows.

On **April 13th** we will watch *The Kingdom of Heaven*. Liam Neeson and Orlando Bloom do a great job as Protectors of Jerusalem, and the movie does a great job in introducing us to the history of holiness, devotion, and bloodshed between Christian and Moslems in seeking to control the sacred sites of the Holy Land. This is a great movie. You will enjoy it, along with our discussion, and the service afterwards.

The movie that is under discussion for **April 20** features more than a little violence. *The Matrix* has become a classic because of the many religious themes that are raised implicitly and explicitly. The over-the-top violence serves more of a subliminal role as background noise, along with showing off advances made with special effects. Nevertheless, with names like Neo and Trinity, and an ending that features the power of love conquering death, there are lots of connections with our Christian faith. Join us for an interesting discussion, and for worship, too.

